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Law school 'bugging' panel reportedly bugged

STAT

By Charles Nicodemus

A former intelligence officer has been accused of improperly "bugging" a law school panel discussion at which the man and two other former agents assured students that such things no longer happen.

The incident allegedly took place Tuesday at the Chicago Kent-ITC College of Law, 77 S. Wacker.

Douglass Cassel Jr., a civil liberties lawyer who also appeared on the panel, said of the incident:

"I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. It was an outrage. But it was so ridiculous it was almost funny."

"I WAS PARTICULARLY chagrined because during the discussion I, too, told the students that regardless of the intelligence community abuses that had occurred in the

past, I was confident that this meeting was not the target of military surveillance."

Now Cassel says he's not so sure.

OTHERS WHO ATTENDED the noon panel discussion, sponsored by the school's International Law Society, said that at the end of the meeting, when the former intelligence officer was seen picking up a tape recorder that no one had noticed before:

- He acknowledged he had recorded the session without permission or notice—which would violate Illinois law. But he refused to say why.

- He declined to reveal what he planned to do with the tape and refused to surrender the recording when asked to do so.

- He would not reveal whether he is now connected with any intelligence agency. During the talk he said he had been a "Green Beret" (Army Special Forces) intelligence

agent. He would say only that he is affiliated with the Association of Former Intelligence Officers, headquartered outside Washington, D.C.

- Beyond affirming that his name was "Gene Kuhrmeier," as he had been introduced, he declined to give his address or to say how he could be located.

ANOTHER OF THE panelists, Kent student William Hooks, a former Marine intelligence officer, later explained that although he had invited Kuhrmeier and the other former officer to the session, he didn't know either of them.

The panel discussion followed the showing of a film, "The Intelligence Network," which was critical of domestic spying and abuses by federal, state and local intelligence agencies in the 1950s, '60s and '70s.

After the movie, Kuhrmeier, Hooks and the other former military intelligence officer on the panel contended that the intelligence community had never committed the kind or number of spying activities suggested by the film.

And they maintained that whatever the problems of the past, there are no such abuses now.

WITNESSES SAID that at the end of the session, as the audience of some 75 students was leaving, one student saw Kuhrmeier pocketing a tape cassette and asked him if he had recorded the meeting.

Kuhrmeier admitted he had, but would say little else—and then strode out of the classroom, onlookers said.

Cassel said he plans to learn more about Kuhrmeier's identity, then contact him to demand that he surrender the tape and provide an affidavit that no copy has been made.